

Subject: Selawik Project ID 3685 and 3686 Public Comment_REVISED

From: Annabelle Alvite <aalvite@nwabor.org>

Date: Fri, 23 Dec 2005 16:38:55 -0900

To: planning_comments@dot.state.ak.us

CC: jerry_rafson@dot.state.ak.us

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Please accept this REVISED comment and delete original sent 12/22/05 as identified at the bottom.

A. Alvite

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to urge reconstruction THIS summer 2006, of at LEAST the most dangerous, and even life threatening, portions of the Selawik board road system. After years of diligent piecemeal repair, replacement and patch up of deteriorating transportation infrastructure, Selawik residents deserve some measure of safe passage in their daily lives, especially for the elderly, disabled, and children.

In 2004, I worked closely with the community of Selawik on a grant proposal to reconstruct about 0.85 miles of the most dilapidated sections of their board roads. I became shockingly aware of the dangerous condition of their main transportation system. Beyond Kotzebue, Selawik has the largest village population (900) in our region. Built entirely on wetlands, there is hardly any "ground" to walk on when the board roads are impassable due to rotting wood or gaping holes.

Happily, the grant was awarded. We were even more excited that the grant could be used as a critical local share match to secure \$2.4M to reconstruct 3.5 miles of board road, almost the entire Selawik board road system. We were all thrilled expecting work to begin THAT summer 2005. But it was devastating to learn that construction would not begin until 2007 due to the nature of the larger \$2.4M project.

"It is the policy of the (ADOT) . . . that state match . . . be used only on those projects that best serve state interests, and that local . . . matching funds shall be required"

Does it serve the state interest to ensure the general public and direct personal safety of its citizens, even if they do not live in the more populated urban centers? Selawik has met the local match.

Imagine the need for emergency response in the event of a fire or road related tragedy (as recently when someone lost their leg). The death defying board roads beg to exacerbate an already critical situation. If cost-benefit is a criteria, what is the cost of serious injury, loss of property or even life? and when litigation is involved? in a loss that could have been prevented? by simply doing the right thing to benefit the people?

Even if the larger road projects must wait until 2007, something must be done to prevent another dangerous year of loose, broken, failing and entirely missing sections of board road, protruding sharp edges, and a number of other unforeseen hazards, which, as I learned last fall, are even more treacherous as things ice up and daylight decreases. I felt extremely unnerved picking my way along the board roads and can only imagine the terror an elder or disabled person must feel navigating these routes which have caused a number of documented injuries.

No urban community would tolerate or be expected to tolerate such unacceptable conditions but would be decrying this as a violation of human rights. While we all appreciate the dedicated work of the ADOT, I urge the authorizing agencies to respect the hard work Selawik has done and begin critical reconstruction in 2006 of at least the most hazardous (and most used) sections of board road, such as those leading to the dumpsite, to address these serious safety and life threatening concerns.

Sincerely,

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-----Original Message----- (Please DELETE earlier comment with this header.)

From: Annabelle Alvite [mailto:aalvite@nwabor.org]

Sent: Thursday, December 22, 2005 6:38 PM

To: 'Planning Comments@dot.state.ak.us'

Cc: 'jerry_rafson@dot.state.ak.us'; 'Roswell Schaeffer [E-mail]'; 'Raven Sheldon'

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